

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

VETERINARY SERVICE

18 October 2000

Dear Dr Manis

UNITED STATES FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE AUDIT REPORT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND 2000

Thank you for the copy of the United States Food Safety and Inspection Service draft audit report based on the visit by Dr Bolstad to Northern Ireland during May 2000. I, my staff, laboratory personnel and the commercial companies were most impressed by Dr Bolstad's professionalism, thoroughness and fairness as an auditor. I am therefore content to accept his comments and criticisms.

Following upon Br Bolstad's visit my staff drew up a list of the non-compliances which he had outlined at his exit meeting and with the co-operation of the commercial interest have set about correcting these deficiencies. A copy of the corrective steps agreed by the commercial company are attached to this letter as an annex.

Dealing with the non-compliances in the order laid out in the report of the exit meeting:

1. The deficiencies in cleaning observed by the auditor during the pre-operational review were entirely due to the commercial company deviating from their normal cleaning system in order to prepare for the audit inspection. Perversely, in their efforts to ensure that the equipment and tables received additional cleaning they achieved the opposite result.
2. A number of damaged trays and stainless steel tanks were observed by the auditor. These have been replaced by the commercial company.
3. At the time of the audit no formal pre-shipment review was being carried out by my staff. A pre-shipment review system is now in place in both USDA exporting premises.

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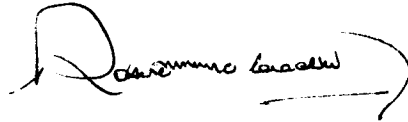
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4. An improved, more reliable system for re-sampling of non-compliant water samples has been developed and implemented in the USDA/FSIS approved premises.
5. Full documentation of operational sanitation activities in both USDA/FSIS approved premises have been introduced and implemented.

If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr R M McCracken", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

DR R M McCracken
Chief Veterinary Officer

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Dr Mark Manis
Director
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ANNEX

TIMETABLE FOR THE CORRECTION OF NON-COMPLIANCES

Non-compliance	Agreed action	Date for completion
1. Bone belt in poor condition	To be replaced	1 November 2000
2. Stainless steel guard beneath the bone belt not continuous does not protect the table from debris.	Cutting table to be reduced in length so that the end of the belt is beyond the end of the table. Guard to be altered to achieve continuous protection.	1 September 2000
3. Room currently used as a machinery store not food standard.	To be refurbished.	February 2001
4. Blast freezer ceiling damaged and unhygienic	To be cleaned and refurbished.	1 August 2000
5. Cracked plastic over re-inspection table	To be replaced.	Completed
6. Drip from chiller in loading bay.	To be fixed	Completed
7. Damaged meat trays.	To be removed	Completed
8. Damaged metal bins	To be replaced	Completed
9. No wash-hand basin, knife steriliser adjacent to re-inspection table.	Table and lights to be moved	1 August
10. Some equipment poorly cleaned.	Cleaning SOPs to be re-examined. Schedules to be altered to indicate that some equipment should be re-washed before use, as well as immediately after use.	Completed
11. No documentation for pre-shipment review.	To be produced by QA staff in line with that contained in Generic HACCP – 3, September 1999	Completed
12. No written procedures to cover the pre-cutting check.	To be produced with statement which indicates the USDA zero tolerance policy to faecal contamination or ingesta.	Completed